

NOTES & NEWS

A Giant *Neomenia*

from the Magellanic Province

BY

AMELIE H. SCHELTEMA

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Woods Hole, Massachusetts 02543

AND

LUITFRIED v. SALVINI-PLAWEN

I. Zoologisches Institut der Universität Wien
A-1010 Wien, Dr. Karl Lueger-Ring 1

(1 Text figure)

THE "WORM MOLLUSKS", known as aplacophorans or solenogasters, are primarily benthic creatures of the deep sea. They are usually small, 5 to 20 mm in length, although species longer than 5 cm have been described. They form a constant, but numerically minor, component of the continental shelf, slope, abyssal, and ultra-abyssal (hadal) faunas (HESSLER & SANDERS, 1967; BELYAEV, 1966; SALVINI-PLAWEN, 1971).

Two specimens of an exceptionally large species were dredged in 1966 from the continental shelf north of the Falkland Islands. Sr. Victor Scarabino of the Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Uruguay, kindly brought a specimen to one of us (AS) during a recent Fulbright travel grant.

A preliminary identification places the specimen in the genus *Neomenia* as it is presently defined by body configuration, and especially by the grooved shape of the spicules. A species description awaits dissection and histological preparation.

The length of the preserved specimen along the dorsal midline is 25 cm; along the ventral midline, 7½ cm; and along the lateral midline, 20 cm. The animal would therefore be 17 to 20 cm long in the living condition. The median circumference of the specimen is 14 cm; the dorso-ventral diameter, 5 cm.

The two specimens were dredged from 130 m at 47°09' S, 61°01' W by the research vessel *Walther Herwig* on June 25, 1966, station 313. José María Orensanz from the Instituto de Biología Marina de Mar del Plata, Argentina, picked out and preserved the specimens.



Figure 1

Lateral view of a new Magellanic species of *Neomenia*
scale in mm

Large benthic Magellanic animals have been known since the "Challenger" Expedition. That such large animals at relatively shallow depths should have escaped collection before is an indication of how little we still know of the continental shelf and deep-sea faunas of the world.

Literature Cited

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